

Toby's Back in Town

Make plans to attend How Now White Cow.

Show dates are Sept. 27, 28, Oct. 4, 5, 11, 12.

The tent opens at 7 p.m., and show starts at 7:30.

Parsons' 13th annual Toby Show opens this weekend in the big tent next to the Municipal Building. The show this year is entitled *How Now White Cow (or You Can Put Your Shoes in the Oven, but That Don't Make'em Biscuits)*. It promises to be another hilarious adventure in Toby World.

Shane Bridges, who portrays Toby, says that this show is the same one he did when he first started doing Toby Shows, way back in 1996. "I remember the first time I read this show," says Bridges. "I thought it was the funniest thing and it turned out to be the most fun I had ever had on stage. And what do you know, I'm still doing Toby shows here 23 years later."

Bridges likens this show to the "concert" held at the end of the Toby show each year with lots of singing, dancing and brand new old jokes! "We do surveys every year and at least half of our respondents say their favorite part of the show is all the funny stuff at the end. So we're giving you a whole show of just the funny stuff!"

The Rivertime Players performed *How Now* in their first Toby Show here, in 2007. "I'll never forget that night," recalls Bridges. "There was 300 people there, standing room only, and there were huge laughs that you could literally watch roll through tent. It was probably the most magical night of theatre I've ever been a part of."

The cast this year includes Toby veterans Mark Tubbs, Ivan Hobbs, Jerry Evans, Anna Kane Townsend and Posey Bridges. "I love these guys," Shane Bridges says. "What can you say about Mark? He has poured his entire heart and soul into this theatre company...not to mention his wallet! Ivan will do ABSOLUTELY any ridiculous thing I ask him to do. Jerry is super dedicated and has grown so much as an actor. Anna Kane is a multi-talented and very funny young actress, and Posey is, without a doubt, my favorite actress in the world."

Jaelyn Pierce, who played a small part in last year's show, also has a cameo in this show. "She is absolutely adorable," says Bridges.

This year's show also features Toby newcomers: Emily Keeton, Shelby Bawcum, Hueston Smith and Houston Starrett. "Emily Keeton is a local treasure," says Bridges. "I've followed her since she was a kid, watching her sing at various events. She is super talented, completely at home on a stage, and a wonderful person to boot! I'm so glad we were finally able to get Emily in one of our shows!"

"Shelby Bawcum was made for this," brags Bridges. "I didn't know Shelby, but Emily recommended her, and boy am I glad she did. Shelby has jumped right on the back of the silliness of this show and grabbed the reigns. Wait til you see

how much fun Shelby has being in this show."

Hueston Smith is in his first Toby Show, but he has been in a string of Rivertime Players shows now that began with the Christmas show last year. "We just can't rid of the guy," jokes Bridges. "Not only is Hueston a talented comedian, but he is also fully committed to doing whatever it takes to make the show happen. This young man helped us put up the tent voluntarily! That's dedication!"

Rounding out the list of Toby newcomers is young Houston Starrett. "This kid has been sitting in the front row of this show for years. I've always noticed him and thought he would make a good actor. He's just got the face for it! We finally got him involved in our Kid Camp this past summer, and Houston is a RIOT! Wait til you get a load of him!"

Hot and dry conditions made putting the tent up this year especially difficult. "It's been pretty bad at times in the past, but never like this. Kudos to Wayne Lyles and the City of Parsons Department of Public Works! As always, there would be no tent show without them."

Make plans to attend *How Now White Cow*. Show dates are Sept. 27, 28, Oct. 4, 5, 11, and 12. The tent opens at 7 p.m., and the show starts at 7:30. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$2 for children 12 and under. For more information go to the Rivertime Players' Facebook page, or call (731) 847-6358.